

# Special Broadcasting Service

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The **Special Broadcasting Service** (SBS) is one of two government-funded Australian public broadcasting radio and television networks, the other being the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). The stated purpose of SBS is "to provide multilingual and multicultural radio and television services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society"<sup>[1]</sup>.

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## History

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In 1975, concerns that minority communities might require details in their own languages led to the establishment of two ethnic radio stations, 2EA in Sydney and 3EA in Melbourne. These started broadcasting in June 1975, with seven and eight foreign languages, respectively.

The following year, the Government created the Consultative Committee on Ethnic Broadcasting. Following the recommendation of this and subsequent committees, the *Broadcasting and Television Act 1942* was amended to found the Special Broadcasting Service. This legislation came into force on 1 January 1978, with the new broadcaster taking responsibility for 2EA and 3EA<sup>[2]</sup>.

SBS TV began test transmissions in April 1979 when it showed various foreign language programs on ABV-2 Melbourne and ABN-2 Sydney on Sunday mornings. Full-time transmission began at 6.30pm on 24 October 1980 (United Nations Day), as Channel 0/28. At the time, SBS was broadcasting on UHF Channel 28 and VHF Channel 0, with a planned discontinuation of the latter at some time in the future. Bruce Gyngell, who introduced television to Australia back in 1956, was given the task of introducing the first batch of programs on the new station.

On 16 October 1983, the service expanded into Canberra, Cooma, and Goulburn and, at the same time, changed its name to Network 0-28. Its new slogan was the long-running "Bringing the World Back Home". The network changed its name to SBS on the 18th February, 1985, and began daytime transmissions. SBS expanded to Brisbane, Adelaide, Newcastle, Wollongong and the Gold Coast in the June of that year.

On 5 January 1986, SBS ceased broadcasting on the VHF0 frequency. Although many Australians at the time did not have UHF antennas, SBS's VHF license had already been extended by a year at this stage and not all antennas had worked well with the low-frequency Channel 0 either<sup>[3]</sup>.

In August 1986, the Government proposed legislation that would merge SBS into the ABC. This was highly unpopular with ethnic communities, leading Prime Minister Bob Hawke to announce in 1987 that the proposed amalgamation would not proceed. The SBS Youth Orchestra was launched in August, 1987 with founding conductor Matthew Krel.

Plans to introduce limited commercial-program sponsorship, and the establishment of SBS as an independent corporation with its own Charter were put in place in July, 1989. The proclamation of the *Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991* officially made SBS a corporation in 1991. Throughout the early 1990s, SBS TV coverage is expanded further to include new areas such as the Latrobe Valley, Spencer Gulf, Darwin, north-east Tasmania, Cairns and Townsville.

In 1992, the SBS' radio and television facilities were gradually moved to new headquarters in Artarmon, New South Wales from its original studios at Milson's Point. The new building was officially opened in November, 1993 by Prime Minister Paul Keating. A national radio network was launched in January, 1994. The new service initially covered Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Darwin, while original

## Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)



<b>Type</b>	Broadcast radio and television
<b>Country</b>	Australia
<b>Availability</b>	National
<b>Slogan</b>	Six Billion Stories and counting...
<b>Owner</b>	Government of Australia
<b>Key people</b>	Carla Zampatti, Chairman; Gerald Stone, Deputy Chairman
<b>Launch date</b>	1975 (Radio) 1980 (Television) 2001 (Digital TV)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sbs.com.au">www.sbs.com.au</a>

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stations 2EA and 3EA were renamed Radio Sydney and Radio Melbourne, respectively. The new national service was launched on a separate frequency in Sydney and Melbourne in July of that year. Throughout 1996, radio services were expanded to cover Hobart and Canberra, while SBS TV's coverage was further expanded to include the New South Wales north coast and Albury.

South Park, SBS' most successful television series was first shown on the network in 1998. A time-delay system was installed for South Australia in May 1999, shortly before the establishment of the Transmission Services division (intended to manage transmission and self-help services). A New Media division, responsible for the SBS website, was established at the start of 2000, in time for the first webcast of the AFI Awards. Ratings continued to increase through 2000 to 2001 - increasing to an overall 5.2 per cent average weekly audience share<sup>[2]</sup>.

Four languages were dropped, and four added, from SBS Radio in April, 2003, while hours for Cantonese, Mandarin and Arabic language broadcasts (amongst others) were increased. SBS broadcast the 2004 Athens Olympics in partnership with the Seven Network. SBS broadcasted the Euro 2008 in Austria and Switzerland.

Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Arabic language broadcasts were added to SBS' *WorldWatch* television schedule in 2003.<sup>[4]</sup> The Vietnamese service, taken from the government-controlled channel VTV4, was protested against by the Vietnamese community, many of whom found the bulletin's portrayal of the communist Vietnamese flag and Ho Chi Minh offensive. The Vietnamese Community of Australia, claimed that the program's lack of reports on political arrests and religious oppression were also offensive, especially to those who fled the country following the Vietnam War<sup>[5]</sup>.

The backlash resulting from these events prompted SBS to begin showing disclaimers before all externally-produced bulletins, distancing the broadcaster from each bulletin's editorial content.

In May 2008, SBS unveiled a new look logo, as well as a new slogan: *Six Billion Stories and counting*.<sup>[6]</sup>



## Services

[edit]

### SBS Radio

[edit]

*Main article: SBS Radio*

SBS Radio broadcasts in 68 languages in all Australian states, producing an estimated 13,500 hours of Australian programming for its two frequencies in Sydney and Melbourne as well as its national network. Much like SBS TV, SBS radio is funded by a mix of government grants, paid-for government information campaigns and commercial advertising<sup>[7]</sup>. SBS Radio will broadcast the Euro 2008 in Austria and Switzerland.

Following "extensive community consultation" in 2003, a range of new programs were introduced, including services in Malay, Somali and Amharic in addition to the expansion of many existing programs.<sup>[7]</sup>

### SBS Television

[edit]

*Main article: SBS Television*



SBS TV is available nationally through a network of terrestrial transmitters in addition to the Optus Aurora satellite service. SBS TV devotes a significant part of its morning television schedule to news bulletins in languages other than English<sup>[8]</sup> as well as showing many subtitled, foreign-language films. Its own news and current affairs aim to have a higher concentration on international affairs than the ABC or the commercial networks. It also shows many documentaries and current-affairs programs, while its sports coverage has a strong focus on international sports, primarily football (soccer) and cycling (especially the Tour de France) - often<sup>[when?]</sup> leading the station to be lampooned as "Sex and Bloody Soccer", "Sex Between Soccer" or "Sex, Boobs and Subtitles"<sup>[citation needed]</sup>.

At the end of 2006, SBS began showing advertising breaks during programs<sup>[9][10]</sup>, a move which was intended to increased funding for the commission of multi-cultural drama and documentaries, and to support World News Australia's shift to a one-hour format, a change unpopular with many viewers<sup>[11]</sup>.

### Callsign

[edit]

Regardless of state or territory, SBS television services always use the callsign 'SBS'. In capital cities, SBS is broadcast on analogue UHF channel 28, while regional and digital television frequencies may vary.

### Digital Television

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SBS has been one of the most progressive networks with regard to digital broadcasting. Much like the ABC, this is primarily due to

government restrictions on commercial multi-channelling. Since 2001, SBS TV has been broadcast via digital television to Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Canberra, and since 2003, in Darwin.

In 2008, SBS had 4 digital services [1]

1. SBS - channel 3, the primary SBS channel (also broadcast in analogue)
2. SBS HD - channel 30, a simulcast of the primary SBS channel which is in 720p HD
3. SBS World News Channel - channel 32, foreign news service - a morning simulcast of the primary channel's morning WorldWatch mix of foreign-language news bulletins, which it then repeats in the afternoon and evening.

Channels 33 and 34 are current placeholders for upcoming Digital Services

These services are available nationally through digital terrestrial television, only the primary SBS channel is available on the Optus Aurora satellite platform.

Former Services

1. SBS2 - channel 31 (formerly SBS Essential), screens multi-view sporting events known as "Sports Highlights", and other digital only projects, when available

In October 2008, the SBS applied for funding to expand SBS News into an "SBS World" channel.[2] This would be mainly in languages other than English, with an aim to expand Australia's understanding of and exposure to the Asia Pacific region. It would also have children's programming for language learning and expand the World Watch news service.

All information [3] [4]

## Language services

[edit]

SBS is one of the world's largest subtitling organisations, producing subtitles not just for films to be shown on its own television channel, but also for foreign film and documentary producers around the world. Services include translation from English to other languages, and from foreign languages to other languages, as well as to English[12].

Through its Language Services unit, SBS also provides a range of translation, typesetting, and voice-over services.[13].

## Other

[edit]

The network provides a rehearsal venue for the SBS Radio and Television Youth Orchestra, an orchestra that records many broadcasts for the network and tours regularly overseas.

## See also

[edit]

- SBS Television
- SBS Radio
- SBS World News Channel
- SBS Essential
- SBS Independent

## References

[edit]

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3. <sup>▲</sup> **The History of Australian Television: SBS Television**, accessed 22 May 2007
4. <sup>▲</sup> **"SBS Timeline"** . **Special Broadcasting Service**. Retrieved on 2007-05-20.
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6. <sup>▲</sup> **SBS: Six Billion Stories and counting** SBS Corporation, accessed 8 May 2008
7. <sup>▲</sup> **a b** **About SBS Radio**
8. <sup>▲</sup> **SBS - WorldWatch**, accessed 20 May 2007
9. <sup>▲</sup> **Commercials and Promotions FAQ**
10. <sup>▲</sup> **SBS to Bolster News and Current Affairs. Increase Australian Content** SBS Corporation, June 2006
11. <sup>▲</sup> **Daily Flute: SBS advertisements** accessed 26 May
12. <sup>▲</sup> **SBS Subtitling** SBS Corporation, accessed 20 May
13. <sup>▲</sup> **SBS Language Services** SBS Corporation, accessed 26 May

## External links

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- **SBS Transmitter Site Locations and Frequencies**

■ SBS Youth Orchestra

v · d · e

**Television**

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[hide]

**SBS Television** | SBS TV • SBS HD • SBS World News Channel

**Other** | SBS Essential • World Movies

**SBS Radio** | Radio 1 • Radio 2 • National

**Divisions** | SBS World News Australia • SBS Sport • Programs • SBS independent •  
SBS Radio and Television Youth Orchestra

Categories: Australian radio networks | Australian television networks | Special Broadcasting Service | Government entities of Australia



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